



MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION
COMMITTEE
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TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

Technical Co-operation Sub-Programme for the Protection of the Marine Environment

Progress Report 1997- 1998

Implementation of the Protocol to the Barcelona Convention concerning co-operation in combating pollution in the Mediterranean Sea by oil and other harmful substances in cases of emergency

Note by the Secretariat

SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides information on activities carried out under the aegis of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) during the years 1997 and 1998. It complements the information as contained in document MEPC 43/16.
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 2
<i>Related documents:</i>	Information on this programme has been presented earlier in MEPC 41/15 and MEPC 41/INF.18

1 Attached, for the information of the Committee, is a progress report on activities carried out under the aegis of the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC) during 1997 and 1998.

Action requested of the Committee

2 The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided and to comment as appropriate.

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ANNEX
PROGRESS REPORT
(1977 - 1998)

Note by REMPEC

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL TO THE BARCELONA CONVENTION
CONCERNING CO-OPERATION IN COMBATING POLLUTION IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN SEA BY OIL AND OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES
IN CASES OF EMERGENCY**

1. Since the last Meeting of REMPEC's Focal Points held in Malta in October 1996, and in conformity with the strategy adopted in 1989 and with the programme approved by the Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties, REMPEC carried out activities aimed at improving and strengthening the regional system for co-operation and mutual assistance in cases of emergency and at increasing the levels of preparedness for and response to accidental marine pollution of individual coastal States. During the period under consideration, the activities and volume of work of the Centre continued to increase and at the same time the conditions for the functioning of REMPEC which have gravely deteriorated during the past years, did not improve.

2. REMPEC has mainly concentrated its activities on:

- training;
- capacity building;
- assistance in case of emergency.

TRAINING

Regional training courses

3. A specialized regional training course on response to packaged dangerous goods lost at sea was organized by REMPEC in collaboration with "Le Centre de Documentation de Recherche et d'Experimentations sur les pollutions accidentelles des eaux" (CEDRE) in Brest, France between, 4 and 8 February 1997 (REMPEC/WG.16/INF.4).

4. Together with the Italian Ministry of Environment and in co-operation with the Italian chemical industry (ENICHEM), the Centre organized a regional specialized training course on prevention, preparedness and response to accidents involving hazardous and noxious substances carried in bulk, which was held between **24 and 28 November 1997** in **Porto Marghera (Venice), Italy** at the ENICHEM's training centre (REMPEC/WG.16/INF.5).

National training courses

5. During the period under observation REMPEC also conducted national training courses/ workshops in the following coastal States: **Libya** (REMPEC/WG.16/INF.6), **Croatia** (REMPEC/WG.16/INF.7) and **Syria** (REMPEC/WG.16/INF.8). These were held in May 1997, June 1997 and April 1998 respectively.

CAPACITY BUILDING

6. The Centre gives priority to the development of national systems for preparedness and response and to the adoption of subregional contingency plans. These areas constitute the main impetus of present and future actions of REMPEC.

a) **Assistance in developing national systems for preparedness and response**

7. The activities of the Centre in this area are primarily concentrated on: **Albania, Lebanon, Libya, Malta and Syria**. These States are in the process of developing their own national systems.

8. Several meetings between the competent **Maltese** authorities and REMPEC took place at end of last year and this year, which lead to:

- a) the signatory in February 1998 of the Memorandum of Understanding organizing the cooperation between Maltese authorities and REMPEC and the assistance of the Centre;
- b) the preparation and the submission to the EC/LIFE - 98 financial instrument of a project proposal on the development of sensitivity mapping and spill modelling.
- c) the preparation of Interim Emergency Response Procedures.

b) **Emergency preparedness and response to maritime related accidents involving hazardous substances in port areas**

9. Following the request put forward by Turkey a pilot project has been prepared by REMPEC related to a risk assessment study and associated capacity building for preparedness and response for the ports of Mersin and Iskenderun, **Turkey** which has been submitted to the EC/LIFE - 98 financial instrument.

10. REMPEC is currently working closely with the Greek authorities on the preparation of a pilot project on risk analysis for port storage and handling facilities. The project concerns a terminal handling VCM in the port of Thessaloniki, **Greece**.

11. Following a meeting which took place in **Slovenia** in June 1997 REMPEC prepared a draft proposed project on "Risk assessment and associated capacity building for preparedness and response to maritime related accidents involving liquid chemicals in bulk for the Port of Koper (Slovenia)." The technical component of the draft project has been completed.

c) **Assistance in the development of bilateral or multilateral operational agreements (Subregional Contingency Plans)**

Cyprus, Egypt, Israel

12. In June 1996 REMPEC submitted to EC for approval and financing through LIFE financing instrument, a project proposal concerning the development of spill response capabilities of **Cyprus, Egypt and Israel**. The Project was approved in December 1996 and the relevant contract was signed by EC and IMO, on behalf of REMPEC, in February 1997. The total budget of the Project is 699,200 ECUs.

13. The first activity organized under this Project was the **First Meeting of the Steering Committee** of the parties to the Subregional Contingency Plan (Cyprus, Egypt, Israel), held in Cyprus 24-25 March 1997.

14. The following activities have been carried out under this Project:

a) during **1997**

3 national training courses on shore clean-up techniques (September-October 1997);

- first phases of three consultancies on sensitivity mapping, on oil spill modelling and on communications, respectively (initiated starting from June 1997).

b) during **1998**

- The combined First Meeting of National Operational Authorities responsible for the implementation of the Subregional Contingency Plan and the Second Meeting of the Steering Committee (**Egypt**; March 1998);
- A Meeting of a Working Group of National Experts on Communication (**Cyprus**, April 1998)
- 2 national training courses on communications and reporting in **Cyprus** and **Egypt** respectively (April 1998);
- A joint oil spill response exercise (**Cyprus**, November 1998);
- The Second Meeting of National Operational Authorities responsible for the implementation of the Subregional Contingency Plan (**Cyprus**, November 1998);
- Phase two of sensitivity mapping and spill modelling activities.

15. Discussions and preparatory works are still going on for the preparation of a project leading to the development of a Subregional system for combating major marine pollution incidents in the North Adriatic (**Croatia, Italy, Slovenia**).

16. A meeting of the Steering Committee of the Project on oil pollution management in the south Mediterranean sea (**Algeria/Egypt/Libya/Morocco/Tunisia**) took place in MAP's offices in Athens in July 1997. REMPEC was invited to participate in the meeting which decided that REMPEC should be a member of the Steering Committee with the view to ensuring full coordination between the GEF project and the MAP programme. Subsequently REMPEC was invited and participated in the meeting of the Steering Committee organized in **Oslo** in October 1997.

d) **Projects proposed within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership**

17. At the first Meeting of experts on the implementation of the multi-annual rolling work programme for maritime transport in the Mediterranean, organized within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and held in Cyprus 14-16 October 1996, regional projects concerning maritime safety and pollution prevention were identified.

18. As agreed by the Cyprus meeting and subsequently by the REMPEC Focal Points Meeting, REMPEC prepared and submitted to the European Commission DG VII two projects proposals:

1. Port reception facilities for collecting ship-generated garbage, bilge waters and oil residues, which will have two main objectives:

- a) promoting, in accordance with the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, the installation of port reception facilities for the collection of garbage, bilge waters and oily residues generated by ships, as well as at identifying the most suitable, harmonized approach to financially (economically) viable operation of these facilities in the Mediterranean Partner States.
- b) studying (from a regional perspective) the question of the disposal, treatment or recycling of garbage and oily residues collected taking into account other experiences in the field; pilot and demonstration projects should be conducted (**Cyprus, Tunisia**).

2. Preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution by ships which includes three main components:

- a) a comprehensive training programme;
- b) the development of environmental sensitivity maps for oil spill response (in selected countries);
- c) a study of salvage and towing capacities in the Mediterranean region which can be used in case of emergency.

19. Prior to their transmission to the European Commission REMPEC received, as requested, written support from Ministries in charge of maritime transport or/and Ministries of Environment from the non EU countries participating in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The Director of REMPEC already had several meetings with national authorities to discuss these projects, as well as with the European Commission.

20. The proposed projects are in line with the strategy approved within the framework of the MAP, as well as with the various medium term programmes adopted by the Contracting Parties. When preparing these projects, REMPEC took into account other on-going or planned projects in order to avoid duplication and to ensure complementarity of efforts. On the other hand, when preparing its programme for submission to the Contracting Parties and when REMPEC will implement this programme, the Centre, with a view to achieving its overall objectives, will take into account these projects and the fact that not all Mediterranean countries are participating in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

21. The project related to port reception facilities has been accepted. The advice is expected from the EC on the exact date of the start of this project, whose duration is two years.

22. The project proposal concerning preparedness and response to accidental marine pollution was transmitted to the European Commission DG VII, which subsequently requested REMPEC to make some modifications.

ASSISTANCE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

23. In conformity with its responsibility to organize and maintain the Mediterranean Assistance Unit (MAU) in a state of operational readiness REMPEC, with a view to facilitating the activation of the MAU in case of emergency, negotiated arrangements with selected centres of expertise taking into account that the effectiveness of the MAU may largely depend on the availability of the back-up resources and logistic support, which the established centres of expertise can put at the disposal of experts forming the MAU.

24. The Meeting of REMPEC Focal Points (October 1994) requested and subsequently the Ninth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (Barcelona, June 1995) approved that the money recovered from insurers, as reimbursement of expenses incurred by the MAU, be put in a special revolving fund which the Centre should use only for financing the MAU activities. On 10 September 1998 the balance of this account was 18,433.19 USD.
25. The French authorities organized in cooperation with TOTAL oil company a major pollution response exercise (ANTIPOL 97) on 16 and 17 of September 1997, off **Toulon**. Observers from Western Mediterranean countries were invited through REMPEC to participate in the exercise, and several countries sent their observers. The exercise was successfully conducted. International communications and international assistance were tested. The RAMOGEPLAN was activated and the result was satisfactory.
26. A Communication Exercise between REMPEC and SET (Servizio Emergenza Trasporto), Italy, has been carried out within the Framework of the European Chemical Industry's Responsible Care Programme - ICE, during the MEDEXPOL 97 Training Course, which was jointly organized by REMPEC and ENICHEM S.p.A. at ENICHEM's Training Centre in Porto Marghera, **Italy**, 24-28 November 1997.
27. No major accident occurred in the Mediterranean region during the period under consideration. However maritime incidents did occur, which in some cases required REMPEC, on request of the concerned countries, to provide information and advice.
28. The past term has been characterized by:
- a) the fact that most Mediterranean countries have reached that minimum level of preparedness to respond to accidental marine pollution which would in turn allow them to participate more actively in the development of a regional system for co-operation in cases of emergencies;
 - b) the development and the improvement of national arrangements as well as of the regional system which has brought about a constant increase in the activities and volume of work of the Centre;
 - c) the adoption by the Tenth Ordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, in November 1997 in Tunis of a Regional Strategy on Prevention of the Pollution of the Marine Environment by ships.
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